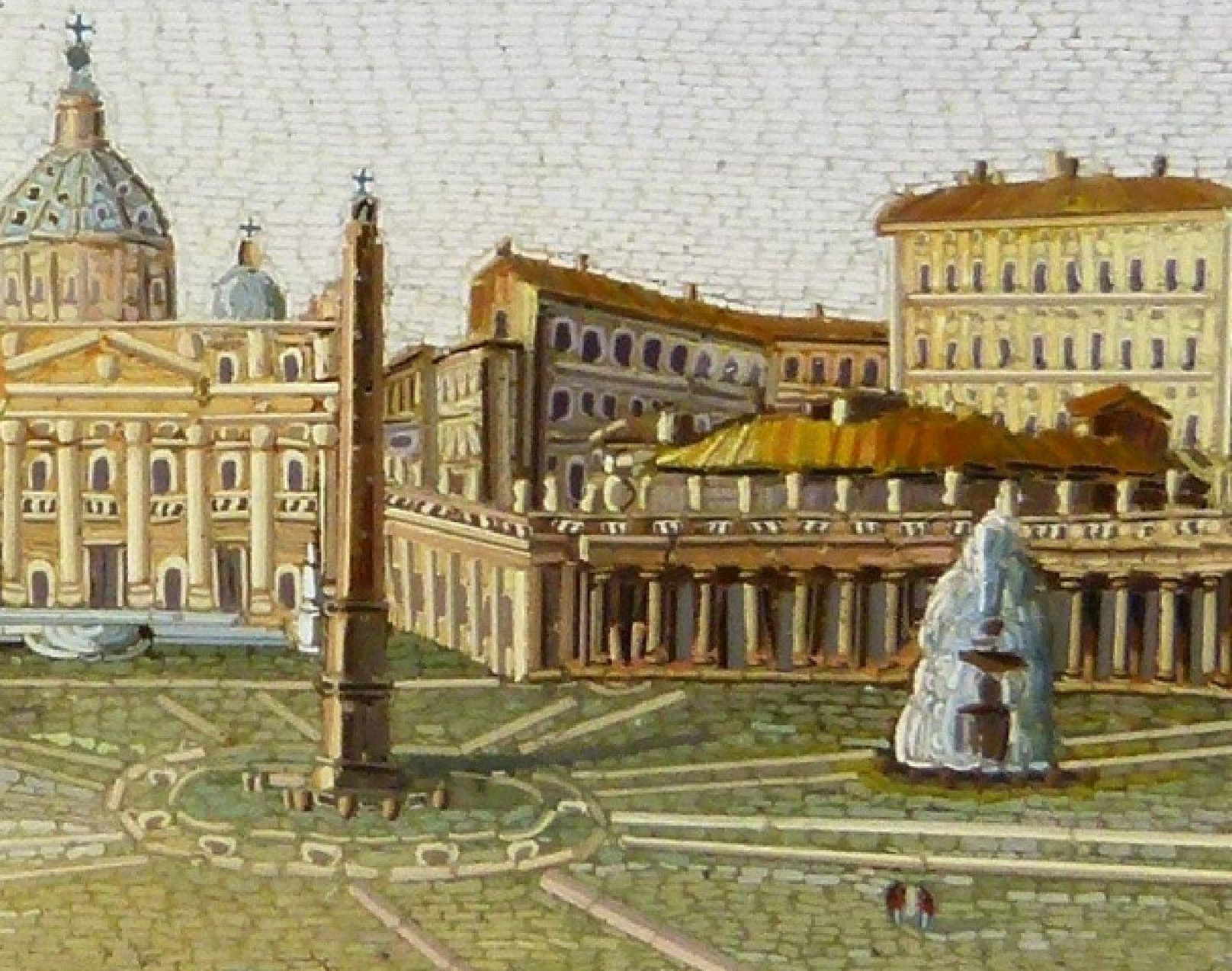


# MICROMOSAICS

Snuff Boxes

from a Private Collection

HAYDN WILLIAMS







# **MICROMOSAICS**

## **SNUFF BOXES**

**from a Private Collection**

Catalogue by

**HAYDN WILLIAMS**

HAYDN WILLIAMS is an independent art consultant. He read Art History at University College, London. For twenty years he worked at Sotheby's where he was head of the department of Portrait Miniatures, Objects of Vertu and Russian Works of Art. He has published articles and lectured upon areas of his expertise.

He was editor and principal author of 'Enamels of the World, The Khalili Collections', and was closely involved with the exhibition of the collection at the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, in 2009-10. At present he is writing a book on Turquerie.



# INTRODUCTION

A workshop for the production of mosaics was established in St Peter's, Rome, in 1578. Later known as the Vatican Mosaic Workshop (*Studio del Mosaico della Fabbrica della Basilica di S. Pietro*), it was initially staffed with craftsmen from Venice who brought with them a long tradition of mosaic-making.

At the outset the Workshop undertook the decoration of side chapels of the Basilica, using cartoons prepared by artists including Cavalier d'Arpino, Pietro da Cortona and Carlo Maratta (fig. 1). Later they were called upon to produce copies of the major altarpieces as humidity was causing the canvases to deteriorate.

The technical improvements achieved by Alessio Mattioli between 1730-50 in the production of glass for the tesserae, which included both greatly extending the range of tints and creating a fine matt and opaque glass, enabled the mosaicists to make faithful copies. This somewhat eased the controversy surrounding the removal of the original altarpieces.



fig.1, Interior of St Peter's, Rome, by Giovanni Paolo Panini, c. 1755,  
Photo © Christie's Images / The Bridgeman Art Library

These mosaics (*mosaici in grande*) were made up of small cubes of glass, tesserae, cut from 'pancakes' of glass (*smalti*) that had been melted on a metal plate in a kiln and allowed to cool - a process used since antiquity. The glass itself was made by combining silica, an alkaline substance such as soda lime, oxide of tin for opacity and metal oxides as colouring agents.

By the middle of the 18th century the greater part of the mosaic decoration of the Basilica had been completed and the mosaicists faced under-employment. To supplement their income the Workshop mosaicists were allowed to work independently, and in this capacity they choose to specialize in micromosaic (*mosaici in piccolo*).

While this technique was greatly developed by the Roman mosaicists from the second half of the 18th century onwards, it had been practiced earlier. In 1737 Cardinal Giuseppe Alessandro Furietti unearthed at Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli a small mosaic of doves perched on a bronze basin, a copy of a work by the Hellenistic artist Sosos of Pergamon. Known as the 'Doves of Pliny', this mosaic of stone and glass tesserae immediately captivated the public and was later reproduced widely in micromosaic. Although its tesserae were not especially small, it nonetheless showed the potential of working on a reduced scale.

Of infinitely greater refinement were the small mosaics made for devotional purposes in Constantinople at the turn of the 14th century (fig. 2). In Rome there was one prominent example, the Man of Sorrows, kept in the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, which had been an important image of veneration for pilgrims since 1385.

The first recorded exhibition of micromosaics was held in 1775 by Giacomo Raffaelli (1753-1836) at his private studio in the Piazza di Spagna, at Via S. Sebastiano. Raffaelli came from a family of Workshop mosaicists and he is generally credited with many of the innovations in *mosaici in piccolo*, although it is probable that some had been developed a little earlier. Most significant was the invention of *smalti filati*. To make these, a globule of molten glass was placed between two metal rods which were then drawn apart so the glass formed a thread (*filati*). Cut from the rods, and while cooling, this thread could be shaped into a square section by working it with spatulas on a metal plate. Once cold, it was cut into short strips ready for use. To create the micromosaic the craftsman would select a shallow tray of the required the size - it was usually made of copper, and put in a layer of slow-drying mastic. Then would begin the painstaking process of inserting with pointed pincers the tesserae into the mastic to create the image. When complete the piece was allowed to dry thoroughly before it was polished to make a smooth and even surface. Small gaps in between the tesserae could be infilled with suitably coloured wax.



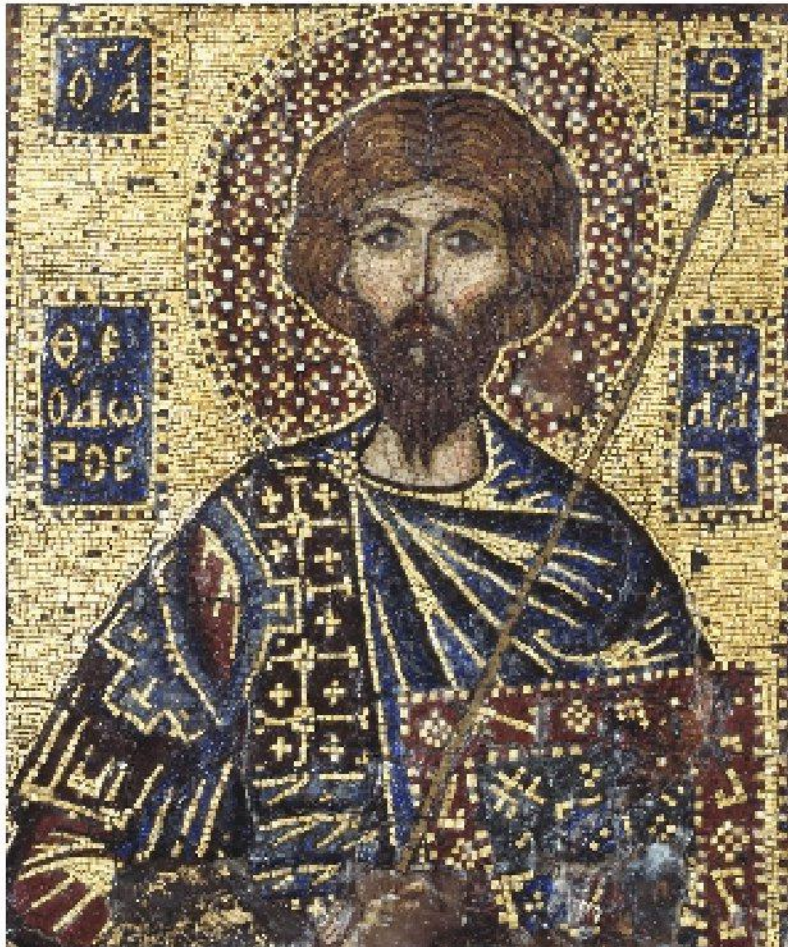


fig. 2, Micromosaic Icon of St Theodore Stratilates,  
Constantinople, early 14th century,  
© The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg,  
Photo by Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, Yuri Molodkovets

Raffaelli produced mosaics showing a variety of subjects including views of the ancient monuments of Rome, which were predictably popular with Grand Tourists (fig. 3). He also made plaques of classical sculpture, still lifes, flowers, animals and birds, among these the 'Doves of Pliny'.

This pictorial repertoire proved to be commercially popular and was continued by succeeding generations of mosaicists. Many of the characteristics of Raffaelli's work may be observed in cat. 12 and 13, including the use of squared single-colour tesserae, the relatively limited palette and the border of *millefiori*. This last feature was a development of the *smalti filati* technique whereby clusters of different coloured glass rods were fused and then drawn out to produce a rosette cross-section when the glass thread was cut.



Further refinements were made by Antonio Aguatti (d. 1846), another scion of a dynasty of mosaicists. Aguatti achieved a greater sense of naturalism in his work by increasing the variety of tesserae shapes - including curves, and by using tesserae of fused colours. These changes enabled him to reproduce more successfully the brushstrokes of the canvases that he used as the model for his plaques. The study of a brown and white spaniel (cat. 15) and the portrait of the 6th Duke of Devonshire's dog 'Tawny' (cat. 20) are evidence of his success.

These studies of dogs were based on paintings by Johann Wenzel Peter, a Bohemian-born artist who specialized in painting animals. Peter lived in the Via Babuino, close to where many mosaicists had their studios, and he developed a business supplying them with cartoons. Other mosaicists who copied his work include Gioacchino and Michelangelo Barberi, Tomaso Calandrelli, Domenico Moglia (cat. 16) and Filippo Puglieschi.



fig. 3, Gallery of Views of Ancient Rome, by Giovanni Paolo Panini, 1758,  
*Louvre, Paris / Giraudon / The Bridgeman Art Library*



In 1810 at the first Mostra Capitolina delle Arti dell' Industria Romana there was a section dedicated to micromosaics. By this date there were twenty micromosaic workshops in the city, chiefly clustered around the Piazza di Spagna. The range in scale of their production is striking: from small elements to be incorporated into jewellery, through plaques destined for the lids of snuff boxes, to large panels variously used for table tops or to be framed like paintings.

The clients for these micromosaics were equally varied. The Holy See was a source of patronage, such as the commission received by Domenico Moglia from Pope Pius VII for a copy of Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of the future King George IV. Giacomo Raffaelli worked for the Napoleonic court at Milan, where he established a Mosaic Workshop (Stabilimento del Mosaico). The Imperial Russian court was particularly enthusiastic about micromosaics and Italian craftsmen were invited to the country to work and to teach native craftsmen - such as George Weckler (cat. 19). Michelangelo Barberi made the spectacular table top 'the Flora of the Two Sicilies' for Emperor Nicholas I, its centre defined by a profile of Grand Duchess Olga Nicolaievna (Gilbert collection, inv. no. 1996.341).

Below this elevated sphere were the visitors to Rome, from the 18th-century nobleman on his Grand Tour to the broader-based social spectrum of the 19th-century traveller. In a book published in 1820, Charlotte Eaton noted "the English flocked in such numbers to Rome, all the streets leading to the Piazza di Spagna are lined with the shops of these Mosaicisti" (Eaton 1820, pp. 319-23).

Aside this tourist market, the mosaicists also sold to clients abroad. When visiting the studio of Filippo Puglieschi, Giuseppe Antonio Guattani noted "una splendida commissione proveniente dal North", comprising some 450 pieces, including jewellery, boxes and pictures. That this was not a unique order appears to be confirmed by the number of Roman micromosaic plaques to be found in the work of certain northern goldsmiths such as Alexander James Strachan (cat. 14 and 16) and Jean François Bautre (cat. 18).







# 1. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, enamel

2 x 9.4 x 6.3cm

mosaic: signed, Gioacchino Barberi, Rome, circa 1820; box: maker's mark Alexander Magnin, Geneva, circa 1825

In the 18th century travellers approaching Rome from the north along the Via Flaminia would have entered the Eternal City through the Porta del Popolo in the Aurelian Walls. Ahead, in the middle of the Piazza, was the obelisk of Pharaoh Ramses II, which had been erected by Pope Sixtus V, and beyond the domed churches of Santa Maria dei Miracoli and Santa Maria in Montesanto that flanked the entrance to the Corso. It was a view that was celebrated by many artists, including Panini, Piranesi and van Wittel.

The present view of the Piazza del Popolo is unusual in that it taken from the south and looks back at the city gate, with the church of Santa Maria del Popolo to its right. If the traveller turned his back on this prospect and walked into the city he would be within a few minutes in the Piazza di Spagna, the quarter where this and many other micromosaics were made.

Gioacchino Barberi (1783-1857), nephew of the celebrated mosaicist 'Cavaliere' Michelangelo Barberi, had a studio at 99 Piazza di Spagna. He produced mosaic plaques spanning the classic range of subjects, from topographical views to classical landscapes and animal studies after Johann Wenzel Peter and others.

Alexander Magnin was a *bijoutier* in Geneva. When he died at the early age of forty-four in 1830 the business was continued by his widow and elder son Charles.





St Peter's Basilica, by Gaspar van Wittel (Gaspere Vanvitelli),  
© Collection of the Earl of Leicester, Holkham Hall, Norfolk / The Bridgeman Art Library







## 2. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold

2 x 8.7 x 5.5cm

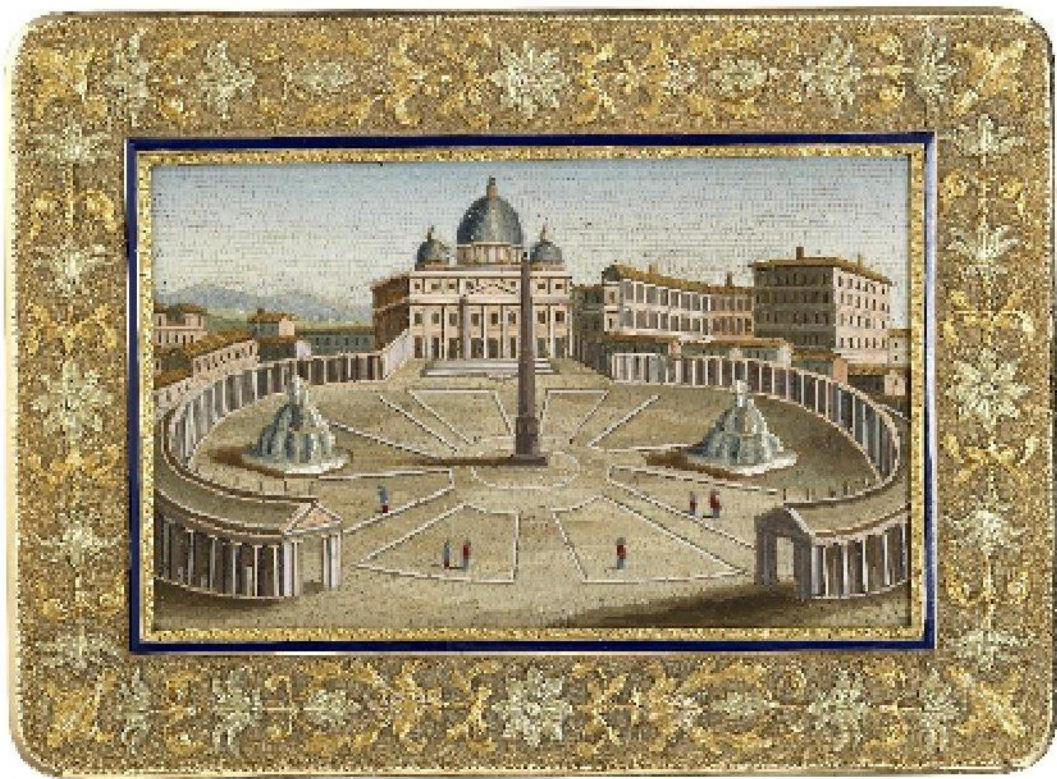
mosaic: Rome, circa 1830; box: maker's mark Auguste Geffroy, Paris, circa 1865

This view of the Piazza San Pietro is based on a prototype painted by Gaspar van Wittel at the end of the 17th century. Taken from the Piazza Rusticucci (which disappeared when the Via della Conciliazione was opened in 1937), it encompasses both arms of the Bernini portico, with the Basilica and Vatican buildings beyond. The mosaicist has considerably increased the scale of the two fountains on either side of the obelisk. A rather more naïvely executed mosaic showing the same view is in the Gilbert collection (inv. no. 1996.258).

Auguste Geffroy registered his maker's mark, the initials AG with a bonbonnière between in a vertical lozenge, in April 1860, from the address 19 rue Thévenot. At the time he was listed as a maker of silver jewellery.

The base of this snuff box is chased with the initial N amidst foliate scrolls. Although lacking a crown or other Imperial attributes such as the eagle or the bee, the design is similar to the decoration of presentation snuff boxes made for Emperor Napoleon III.









### 3. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, enamel, in its original red leather case

1.9 x 8.7 x 6.3cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1820; box: maker's mark SC with arrowheads above and below in a vertical lozenge, Hanau, circa 1825

Just as the Forum was the summation of ancient Rome for Grand Tourists, so St Peter's Basilica represented the modern city. As a consequence views of the two sites, executed in a variety of media, including micromosaic, were produced as souvenirs. The mosaic plaques could either be mounted in Rome, or alternatively retained in red-leather cases to be given to a local goldsmith once the traveller returned home. The present box is an example of the latter. The mosaic shows the Piazza San Pietro from a raised viewpoint that emphasizes the dramatic sweep of Bernini's portico.









#### 4. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, enamel

1.8 x 8 x 5.4cm

mosaic: signed with initials V.V, probably Vincenzo Verdejo, Rome, circa 1810; box: maker's mark Victoire Boizot (Veuve Etienne-Lucien Blerzy), Paris, 1808-1813, numbered 351

At the beginning of the 19th century Vincenzo Verdejo (1779-1854) had a studio at 33-35 Via Condotti and was listed by Moroni as one of the city's leading mosaicists. Among his surviving signed works are two portraits of Pope Pius VII (Gilbert collection, inv. no. MM266 and Petochi 1981, fig. 53) and a study of a standing spaniel (Walter's Art Gallery, Baltimore (inv. no. 43.50)).

In April 1808 Victoire Boizot (Boisot), the widow of Etienne-Lucien Blerzy, entered a mark from 3 rue Coq-Héron, altered in 1809-10 to 3 rue du Coq St-Honoré. In 1812-13 these premises were taken over by the gold box maker Gabriel Raoul Morel.







View of the Campo Vaccino in Rome, by Herman van Swanevelt,  
*Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, UK / The Bridgeman Art Library*







### 5. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, enamel

1.7 x 9 x 6.2cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1810; box: unmarked, probably Hanau, circa 1820

This view taken from the western end of the Roman Forum shows, from the left, the Arch of Septimius Severus, the single column of Phocas, the three surviving columns of the Temple of Divine Vespasian, and to the right the Temple of Saturn.

For the classically educated traveller the impact of being among these ruins was great. Writing twenty-five years after the event, Edward Gibbon recalled "After a sleepless night, I trod, with a lofty step, the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation".



## 6. BONBONNIERE

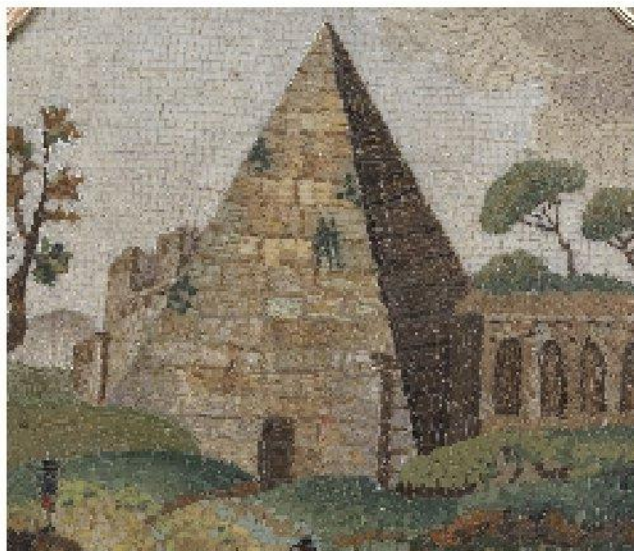
micromosaic, porphyry, gold

2.2 x 7.1cm

mosaic and box: Rome, circa 1800

The pyramid of Cestius near the Porta San Paolo and the Protestant Cemetery in Rome was built circa 18 BC-12 BC as a tomb for Gaius Cestius, a magistrate. An inscription on the east face records that it was completed in 330 days. When the Aurelian Walls were constructed between 271 and 275 AD the pyramid was incorporated into the new structure. In the 1660s Pope Alexander VII ordered the vegetation that by then surrounded the building to be cleared and for the site to be excavated. Thereafter the pyramid became a key source of reference for architects and a popular destination for Grand Tourists.

In his elegy for John Keats written in 1821, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, described it as “one keen pyramid with wedge sublime”.







## 7. BONBONNIERE

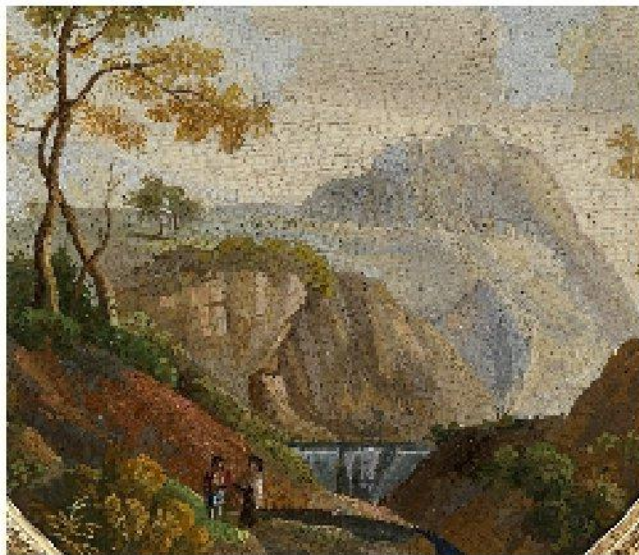
micromosaic, tortoiseshell, gold

2.3 x 8.8cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1830; box: probably England, circa 1830

The landscape compositions that appear in late 18th and early 19th century micromosaics were derived from several sources. Books of engravings of the noted sites of Rome and its environs- such as Domenico Pronti's *Nuova raccolta di 100 vedutine antiche della città di Roma e sue vicinanze incise a bulino*, published in 1795, provided a suitable reference for topographical representation.

Other mosaics were based upon celebrated landscape paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries, including the works of Claude Lorrain (cat. 11a and 11b) and Salvator Rosa (cat. 14). Another alternative, as seen here, was the capriccio landscape, an idealized evocation of the geography and luminous light of the Roman Campagna.





The Falls of Tivoli by Claude-Joseph Vernet,  
*Musée de la Ville de Paris, Musée du Petit-Palais, France / Giraudon / The  
 Bridgeman Art Library*







## 8. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold

1.3 x 6.4 x 5.4cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1815; box: sunburst and crossed-S marks, Germany, circa 1820, numbered 6810

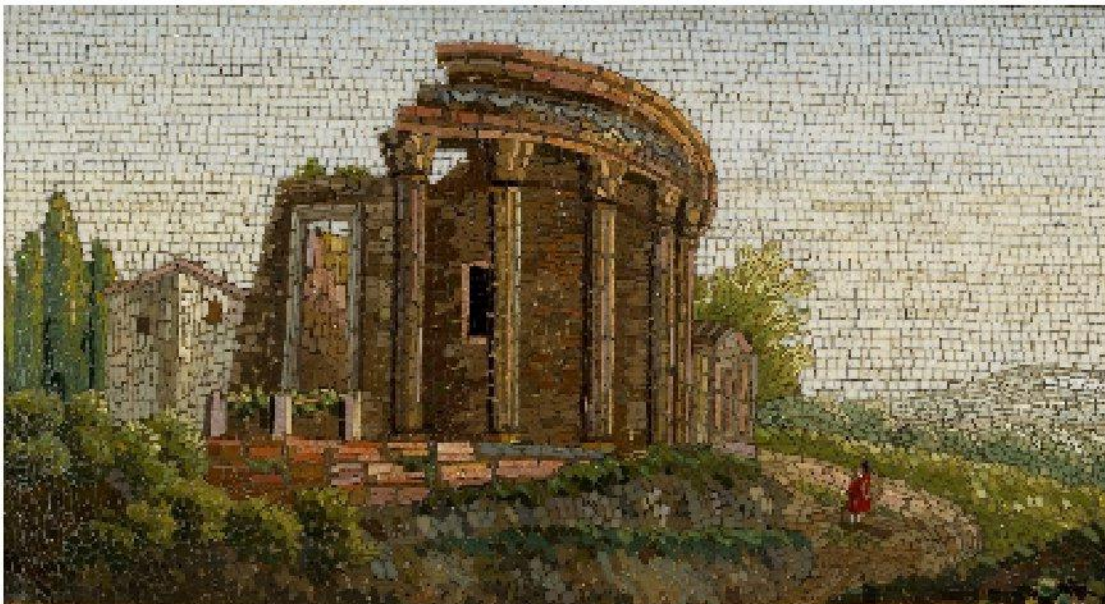
Tivoli - anciently called Tibur - in the Sabine hills to the east of Rome, a spectacular location steeped in literary associations of Horace and Virgil, had been a favoured destination for Grand Tourists and artists since the 17th century. In 1758 the painter Jonathan Skelton noted "this ancient City of Tivoli I plainly see has been ye only school where our two most celebrated Landscape Painters Claude and Gasper studied". Following the example of these painters, mosaicists made plaques showing the most celebrated views, including the Temple of Vesta and the Grand Cascade- "the most noble sight in the world" according to the poet Thomas Gray.

The distinctive inventory number struck on the rim of this snuff box links it to a significant group of boxes whose origin has not yet been firmly established. The number system was used in conjunction with several marks, including the initials FJ and the present sunburst and crossed-S. The system was consecutive as a stylistic development can be traced from the earliest examples, dating to circa 1790, to the later numbers- in the 6000s, made towards the end of the second decade of the 19th century. Assorted evidence encourages the attribution of this production to Germany, and more specifically, to one of the towns favoured by Huguenot goldsmiths such as Hanau or Berlin.





Crown Prince Oscar of Sweden, by Jacob Edward Munch,  
*Private Collection / Photo © O. Vaering /  
The Bridgeman Art Library*







#### 9. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold

1.6 x 7.7 x 4.3cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1810; the box: maker's mark, Michaelsson and Benedicks, Stockholm, 1810

A letter written by Prince Oscar of Sweden, dated 25 March 1812, which formerly accompanied this snuff box records its presentation to "M. Lemoine fils". The Prince was keen to use this box to show his friend, most probably a son of General Lemoine, that Sweden was not a cultural wasteland: "vous voyez qu'en Suède, nous ne sommes pas si sauvages qu'on le croit en France". He asked Lemoine to keep the snuff box "comme une preuve de mon amitié".

(Joseph François) Oscar was the son of Carl XIV Johan, King of Sweden and Norway (former Jean Baptiste Bernadotte) and his consort Désirée Clary. Born in 1799 in Paris, he married, in 1823, Joséphine, daughter of Eugène de Beauharnais, 1st Duke of Leuchtenberg. He succeeded his father to the throne, as King Oscar I, in 1844.

The plaque shows one of the most celebrated ruins of Tivoli, the so-called Temple of Vesta, dramatically located at the edge of a cliff towering over the river Anio. It forms part of the ancient acropolis and was built in the early 1st century BC, on a circular ground plan with elegant Corinthian columns. Nearby stands a rectangular temple, generally known as the Temple of the Sibyl.





'Rinaldo and Armida' by Michele Rocca,  
Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore







#### 10. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, enamel

2.2 x 9.3 x 7.1cm

mosaic: signed, Francesco Depoletti, Rome, circa 1815; box, maker's mark SC, mallet between, in an oval, possibly Sebastien Chaligny, Geneva, circa 1820

This snuff box was purportedly in the collection of Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, Alexander Palace, Tsarskoe Selo.

The composition is based on a painting of 'Rinaldo and Armida' by Michele Rocca (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, inv. no. 37.879). The subject is derived from a passage in Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (XVI, 17-25), where, in the enchanted garden of the sorceress Armida, the captive Rinaldo sees his reflection in her eyes as she gazes at herself in a mirror. Rinaldo's companions, Carlo and Ubaldo, hide in the bushes beyond.

Francesco Depoletti (1779-1854) was listed by Moroni as one of the nine most distinguished makers of mosaics at the beginning of the 19th century. He had a studio at 32 Via Condotti. In 1824 he was invited to go to Naples to establish a school for mosaics similar to that of the Vatican. While this project did not come to fruition, Depoletti profited from his Neapolitan sojourn by studying with Giovanni Crescenzi, a celebrated restorer of ceramics. When he returned to Rome, Depoletti later gained international renown as a restorer of Etruscan vases.

Signed micromosaics by Depoletti are rare. They include three compositions after Claude Lorrain, which if considered with the present work could suggest Depoletti specialized in mosaics after the Old Masters. In the Gilbert collection there is a snuff box inset with a plaque representing Father Time and the Three Fates, also based on an oil painting (inv. no. 1996.443). Finally, and differing from these works, is the spectacular oval plaque of the Shield of Achilles (Christie's London, 8 December 1994, lot 15).





11a. PLAQUE  
micromosaic, gilt-metal  
plaque 10.4 x 14.6cm  
Rome, circa 1810

The composition is based upon 'Landscape with Rebecca taking leave of her father' by Claude Gellée, called Le Lorrain (Claude Lorrain). It was painted for Angelo Giorio, chamberlain and intimate of Pope Urban VIII. Giorio was one of Claude's most important early patrons, acquiring at least seven paintings between 1638 and 1643. Created a Cardinal in 1643, Giorio fell from power following the death of his patron a year later. Afterwards in the collection of Lucien Bonaparte and Lord Ashburton, the painting was last sold Sotheby's London, 12 December 1973, lot 73.

The paintings of Claude Lorrain were greatly admired in the 18th century, particularly by the English who collected them avidly. In 1799 William Beckford paid the vast sum of £6,825 for the 'Altieri Claudes', only to sell them again in 1808 for £10,500. The popularity of Claude's paintings encouraged mosaicists to make copies of several of them.

Another slightly smaller plaque of the same composition, measuring 9.5cm wide, signed by an apparently unrecorded mosaicist P. Capoeni, was sold Sotheby's London, 29 November 2006, lot 21. Both versions edit certain details of the oil painting, inevitable given the reduction in scale.





11b. PLAQUE  
micromosaic, gilt-metal  
plaque 10.4 x 14.6cm  
Rome, circa 1810

The composition is based upon 'Landscape with the flight into Egypt' by Claude Lorrain (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, inv. no. 226 (1966.3)).

Executed in 1663, it was the first of eight paintings the artist painted for his most important patron of his later years, Prince Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna. The painting was the last instance of Claude using an upright composition. To fit this format into the present oblong panel, the mosaicist had to extend the landscape between ruined bridge and the trees to the left. Considered in tandem with its 'pair' (Cal. 11a), it is interesting to speculate whether it was by chance that the mosaic artist chose paintings that had been commissioned by the most important patrons of Claude at the beginning and end of his career.



## 12. COVERED CUP

micromosaic, jade, gold, ruby

4.3 x 12.2 x 7.8cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1805; bowl: Qing dynasty, China, 18th century; mounts: probably London, circa 1825

The dual meaning of the Greek word *psyche*, for 'butterfly' and 'soul', has provided a wealth of symbolic meanings to be associated with the butterfly. In Apollonian allegory a butterfly and a lighted torch symbolize victorious love. It is probable that in this micromosaic the butterfly hovering over a burning oil lamp was intended to convey such a concept. Allegorical allusion is continued in the gold mount, which is finely chased with the *ouroboros*, a snake eating its own tail- a symbol of eternal return, of the perpetual cycle of life, death and rebirth.

The plaque is typical of the work produced in the studio of Giacomo Raffaelli at the turn of the 19th century. The chased gold mounts may be compared with those on snuff boxes made for Rundell, Bridge and Rundell during the reign of George IV.

The Qing dynasty jade cup is in archaistic style carved after a bronze prototype. A similar Ming cup is in the British Museum (inv. no. OA-961, illustrated Rawson 1995, p. 389, fig. 8 (left)).







### 13. BONBONNIERE

micromosaic, granite, gold

2.3 x 8.4cm

mosaic and box: Rome, circa 1805, numbered 41

This still life may be compared with two variant compositions in the Gilbert collection (inv. no. 1996.281) and a private collection (Alfieri 1986, fig. 88). As well as being made with smaller tesserae, the present work is also richer in detail: the variant versions show an uncovered vase, rather than a lidded vase with lobed decoration below; their tripod incense burner is without flames, and the box to the right is silver rather than gold with chased garlands. Further, the objects are lined up along the edge rather than being positioned across the table surface.

All three have the distinctive border of *millefiore* tesserae, a decorative element that was popular at the turn of the 19th century. The present plaque was certainly made in the circle of Giacomo Raffaelli, whose name and the date 1801 are found on the plaque in the private collection.





#### 14. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold

1.5 x 7 x 6cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1810; box: maker's mark Alexander James Strachan, London, 1829

The composition is based on a painting, formerly in the collection of Prince Agostino Chigi, 'Landscape with Mercury and Argus' by Salvator Rosa (The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, inv. no. 32-192/1).

Rosa's dramatic landscapes, with craggy ravines and blasted trees, were particularly admired by proponents of the picturesque landscape in England, and so it is not surprising that this composition was copied by Roman mosaicists. Other versions include one in the Gilbert collection (inv. no. 1996.329) and another in a private collection (Alfieri 1986, fig. 165).





# 15. PILL BOX

micromosaic, gold

1.2 x 4.7 x 3.1cm

mosaic: signed, Antonio Aguatti, Rome, circa 1805; box: maker's mark Adrien-Jean-Maximilien Vachette, Paris, 1798-1809

Dogs were among the most favoured subjects for micromosaics and as a consequence certain compositions were repeated. Two other versions of this brown and white spaniel are known, one in the Gilbert collection (inv. no. 1996.257), the other in a Roman collection (Alfieri 1986, fig. 78). All of these are small in scale and as such could have been used for mounting as a brooch. In an alternative composition the same spaniel was shown accompanied by a black poodle (Gonzalez-Palacios 1977, no. 35 and Sotheby's Geneva, 16 May 1991, lot 82, both plaques signed by Aguatti).

Since the time of Pliny the Elder the dog was considered to be the animal most faithful to man, and it was subsequently used in allegory as an attribute of fidelity. In the present micromosaic the allegorical allusion is further developed as the dog is seen resting on an anchor, an attribute of hope.







Antonio Aguatti (d. 1846) came from a dynasty of mosaic artists and was listed by Moroni as one of the most skilled masters working in the early 19th century. His studio was at 96 Piazza di Spagna. He is credited with developing tesserae of varied shape and of fused colours, which helped enhance the pictorial quality of micromosaics. From 1834 he was professor of mosaics at the Vatican Mosaic Workshop.

Adrien-Jean-Maximilien Vachette was one of the pre-eminent goldsmiths of the era. He became a master in 1779 and pursued a long and successful career until his death in 1839. He was noted for creativity of design and the deft use of a variety of materials, including hardstone and micromosaic.



# 16. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, glass

2.5 x 8.5 x 5.9cm

micromosaics: one signed, Domenico Moglia, Rome, circa 1805; box: maker's mark Alexander James Strachan, London, 1807

In the mid 1810s Giuseppe Antonio Guattani wrote about a visit he made some years previously to the studio of the mosaicist Filippo Puglieschi where he observed “una splendida commissione proveniente dal North di num. 450 pezzi”, including jewellery, boxes and pictures. Among the compositions he saw was the fight between a dog and a cat after the “inarrivabile Peter”.

Johann Wenzel Peter (1745-1829), born in Karlsbad, Bohemia, moved to Rome in 1774 where he specialized in painting animal subjects. His paintings were admired and collected by the Roman nobility, in particular by Prince Marcantonio Borghese, and by visiting tourists, such as the 6th Duke of Devonshire (cat. 20).







Domenico Moglia was one of the most skilled mosaicists of the early 19th century. In 1819 he was commissioned by Pope Pius VII to make a copy of Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of the Prince Regent, later King George IV (Royal Pavilion, Brighton, inv. no. DA330331). He is recorded as having been in Russia between circa 1816-19, during which time he taught George Ferdinand Weckler (cat. 19).

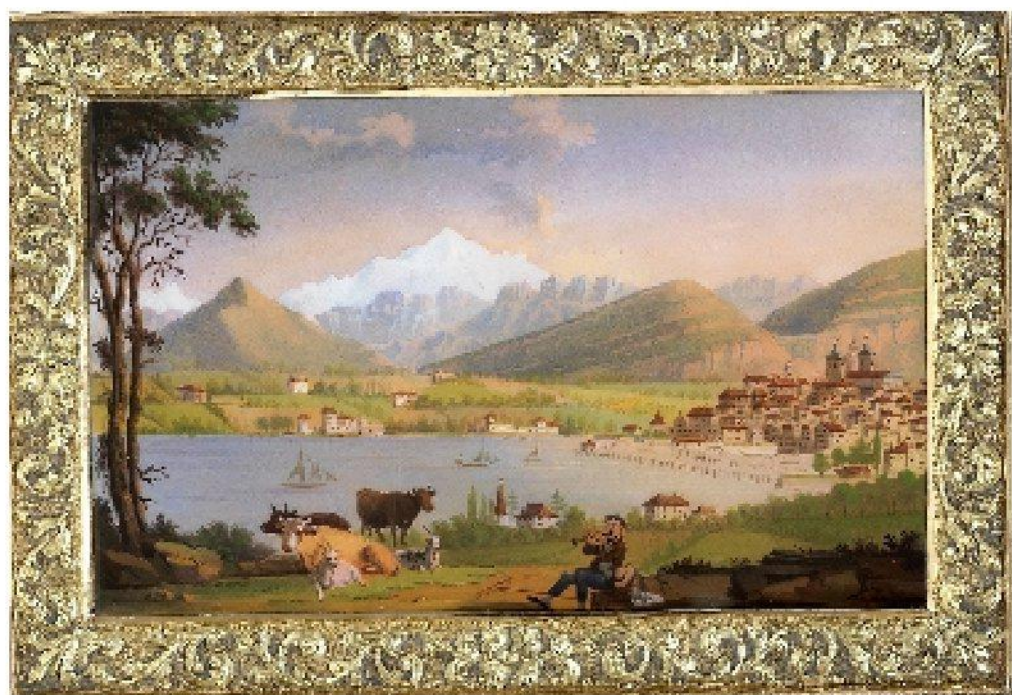
Alexander James Strachan first registered his mark as a smallworker in 1799. He specialized in gold boxes and became the principal supplier to Rundell, Bridge and Rundell for royal presentation boxes. Almost always of generous weight, Strachan's boxes were often decorated with broad borders variously chased with laurel, oak leaves and flowers.

This snuff box by Strachan is perhaps, like cat. 17, by Moulinié Bautte et Moynier, an example of the connection between northern goldsmiths and the Roman mosaicists mentioned by Guattani. Other boxes by Strachan in the same genre include cat. 14 and a box in the Gilbert collection (inv. no. 1996.569), which is set with a mosaic by Gioacchino Barberi of Peter's fight between a dog and a cat.



Mosaic plaque on the base of the box





Enamel plaque on the base of the box







### 17. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, enamel

2.3 x 8.5 x 6.4cm

mosaic: signed Δ, Rome, early 19th century; box: maker's mark, engraved  
'Moulinié Bautte et Moynier', Geneva, 1816-1821, numbered 617

The identity of the mosaicist signing with the Greek letter delta is not known. The composition is based on a painting by Vallati. A variant of this work that includes a fourth dog, signed by Domenico Moglia and with the identification 'Vallati Inv.', is in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

The name of Jean François Bautte (1772-1837), either on its own or in combination with other business partners, is linked to the key areas of Genevois goldsmiths' production in the first half of the 19th century. His first partnership, with Jacques Dauphin Moulinié, was formed in 1793, and even after his death the name was maintained by his son Jacques and son-in-law Jean Samuel Rossel, who formed Rossel-Bautte & Co. in 1855. John Ruskin noted "Virtually there was no other jeweller in Geneva, in the great times".

The existence of a number of snuff boxes inset with Roman micromosaics and stamped with Bautte's maker's mark suggest that such boxes were one of his specialities. He was another of the northerners referred to by Guattani who ordered material from the Roman mosaicists to incorporate in their own work.

This snuff box is unusual in that while the lid is mounted with a mosaic, the base is inset with a Genevois enamel plaque depicting the view of the city from Pregny.



### 18. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, bloodstone, gold

2.2 x 9.4 x 5.2cm

mosaic: Rome, circa 1810; box, unmarked, probably Vienna, circa 1820, the rim engraved 'From Charles Earl Whitworth, to Charles Chetwynd Earl Talbot. Jan<sup>y</sup>. 1822'

The composition is based upon a painting by Johann Wenzel Peter. The artist mentions it in a letter to the mosaicist Giacomo Raffaelli, indicating that he had prepared reduced versions of it and other paintings for the use of mosaicists. Peter wished to know if Raffaelli was interested in the designs and also expressed concerns about exclusivity: "I decided to keep them secret in order to prevent them falling into the hands of other mosaicists. You well know how much nuisance and prejudice has been caused by other people's copies, not only for financial reasons but also as a matter of honour". Whether Raffaelli took up the offer is not known; however, the composition proved to be popular and was copied by several mosaicists, including Antonio Aguatti and Tomaso Calandrelli.



This snuff box may be compared with a similar one, inset with a micromosaic plaque of an arcadian landscape, in the Gilbert collection (inv. no. 1996.359).

Charles Whitworth (1752-1825) pursued a diplomatic career that included postings in Poland, Russia, Denmark and France. In 1801, in a move intended to improve his rather embarrassed financial circumstances, and acting upon the recommendation of the Prince Regent, Whitworth married Arabella, Dowager Duchess of Dorset, described by one contemporary as a "very plain and cold-hearted woman". He was created an Earl in 1815.

Charles Chetwynd (1777-1849) succeeded his father as 3rd Earl Talbot in 1793. He was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland between 1817 and 1821. He married Frances Lambart, daughter of Charles Lambart, of Beau Parc, co. Meath.





### 19. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, enamel

2.2 x 9 x 5.5cm

mosaic: attributed to George Ferdinand Weckler, St Petersburg, circa 1840; box, maker's mark Nicolas Huguët, Paris, circa 1810

George Ferdinand Weckler (1800-1861) was born in Riga. Initially destined for a military career, he changed path and became apprenticed to a glass painter in Moscow. Shortly after he came into contact with Domenico Moglia, a Roman mosaicist then staying in the city, with whom he learnt the art of mosaics. In 1821 he moved to St Petersburg where he rapidly gained Imperial patronage. The following year he was appointed Master of Mosaics at the Academy of Fine Arts. He visited Rome between 1834 and 1838, and while there executed a life size copy of Raphael's 'Transfiguration', later purchased by Emperor Nicholas I for 25,000 roubles. Back in Russia he was subsequently appointed Director of Mosaics at St Isaac's Cathedral. Weckler's work in micromosaic spans a wide range of subjects from mythology to topographical views of Imperial residences and Russian genre.

A variant micromosaic of this composition, showing the summer troika but without the tree to the left or the buildings in the distance, is in a private collection, Rome (Alfieri 1986, fig. 172).

Nicolas Huguët was received as a master goldsmith in Paris in June 1787. He was recorded in the *Almanach du Commerce* until 1815 and the *Almanach Azur* until 1816.







## 20. SNUFF BOX

micromosaic, gold, silver, glass pastes

3.1 x 10 x 6.3cm

mosaic: attributed to Antonio Aguatti, Rome, circa 1820; box: maker's mark Vaillant (Roman script), assaymaster D. Tverskoi, St Petersburg, 1849

This snuff box was presented by Alexander II, Emperor of Russia, to Dr William Lockhart in 1869. It is contained in the original fitted leather case, the lid of which is stamped with the Imperial eagle. The accompanying letter of presentation reads:

*Peking, May 31st 1869*

*My dear Doctor Lockhart*

*It is now one year since the Russian Legation has been the recipient of your valuable professional [sic] services. Informing my Government of them, I am happy to advise you, that the Emperor, as a mark of his satisfaction, has placed in my hands the gold box, I have the honour to transmit herewith.*

*Hoping that its possession may often recall to your mind the gratitude of myself and the other members of the Legation, I beg to subscribe myself ever your sincere friend*

*L. de Balluzin*





William Lockhart (1811-1896) trained as a doctor in Dublin and London before joining the London Missionary Society. In 1838 he was appointed medical missionary to Canton and was later sent to Beijing, where he worked from 1861 to 1864; he retired in 1867. He was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the London Missionary Society from 1869 to 1870, during which period he received this snuff box.

The composition is based on a painting by Johann Wenzel Peter of 'Tawny', a spaniel belonging to William, 6th Duke of Devonshire (Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement). In January 1819 the Duke set out for Italy, and arrived in Rome by the end of March. Save a short trip to Naples in May, he remained there until he commenced his return journey at the end of June. While in Rome he visited the celebrated sites of antiquity and was introduced to the great sculptor Canova, who later became a friend. Throughout his stay he bought works of art; in September that year his agent Gasparo Gabrielli informed him that twenty cases had already been dispatched. It is most probable that Peter's painting of 'Tawny' was among these works.







Alexander II, Emperor of Russia, French School,  
*Private Collection / The Bridgeman Art Library*

Although the painting was sent to England, Peter evidently kept studies which were subsequently used by several Roman mosaicists as a compositional source. Another micromosaic of 'Tawny', attributed to Aguatti and set in a box by Strachan, is in The Beach collection, Florida (illustrated Gabriel 2000, p. 75).





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